

Religious Intelligence.

IS RELIGION DECLINING ?

" Out of the darkness of night
The world rolls into light ;
It is daybreak everywhere."

The reports of the great religious gatherings indicate substantial progress in missions, both home and foreign, in church building, and in many elements of material prosperity. Yet they do not exhibit the deep spiritual results which are the chief object of the Church's existence in the world. The very material prosperity and intense business activity, and the pursuit of pleasure of the age seem to have largely engrossed the time and thought of the people. Nevertheless there are not wanting evidences of deep spiritual earnestness. Patient watchers on lone towers, in answer to the question, "What of the night?" reply, "The morning dawneth." Its freshness breathes around us even now. The heralds of the day appear. The rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings is forefelt by waiting souls. An era of marked religious expansion is predicted.

One evidence of this is the increased emphasis laid on lay co-operation and open-air preaching, and the forward movements in the great cities of the Old World and the New. If the people will not go to the churches, the churches are going to the people. In Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Washington, and Hartford, as well as in the great centres in England, out-of-door preaching is being widely adopted. Dr. Gordon, Dr. Dickson, Dr. J. L. Withrow have been preaching on Boston Common and at the grounds of the Baseball League. In other cities pastors preached outside of their churches, and held an intensely practical after-service inside. Dr. Eaton, late of Toronto, has been preaching at noonday during the week to great crowds in the public square in Cleveland. Millionaires and milliners alike have listened with attention to his burning message. Other pastors held services in the public parks. In Washington the Protestant Episcopal Church has had an evangelistic service on the site of its proposed cathedral. Other clergy and Chris-

tian workers hold vesper services in the market-place, and at the street corners. In Philadelphia and Chicago summer tent preaching has become an institution. Often the stereopticon with Bible pictures draws great crowds, and nothing proves more attractive than the singing of the Gospel hymns, such as made Gwennap Pit and Moorfields under the ministry of the Wesleys and Whitefield resound with the praises of God. The Salvation Army and Church Army, and the Gospel waggon, with its cabinet organ, have been dispensing the Word of Life not merely in the city slums, but in the country places—as notably in a rural mission in Nova Scotia. In the great city of New York the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Protestant Episcopal Churches are having tent services and open-air meetings, which reach thousands of pleasure-seekers on the avenues, in the parks, and in the slums. In the far West Gospel railway cars or moving chapels have travelled thousands of miles over the sparsely settled prairies, and the Gospel of Christ has won new triumphs everywhere.

In Toronto, in the beautiful grounds in front of the Metropolitan Church, hundreds of people have gathered to week-night services under the bright electric lights. In the east and west sections of the city tent services were held. The Rev. Robert Hall has carried on for years a successful Gospel waggon service. The Massey Mission has attracted hundreds to its outdoor stereopticon services. In the highways and the byways of the city open-air services are held, in which the Salvation Army and many earnest Methodist and other workers proclaim the Word of Life, and the Gospel has exhibited its old-time saving and sanctifying power.

These are all harbingers of an era of spiritual expansion and intension. May their numbers be increased. An infinite good will come alike to the churches and to the people. This is a reversion to the early methods by which the Gospel won its greatest triumphs. Our Saviour and his disciples, toiling on hillside and wayside, in the temple courts and in the village streets, preached the Word of the